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season **1996**
ninety 7

Robert Aitken Artistic Director

new music concerts presents
Vancouver New Music



8:00 pm Wednesday January 22 1997 (free admission)
The Gallery School / Art Gallery of Ontario

8:00 pm, Wednesday January 22, 1997
The Gallery School
Art Gallery of Ontario

new music concerts presents

Vancouver New Music Ensemble

Owen Underhill, artistic director

Programme

Rodney Sharman (b. 1958)

**Canon and Acrostic in celebration of Vancouver
New Music Society's 25th anniversary** (1996) dur. 3'
ensemble

Janet Danielson (b. 1950)

Igniting the Dawn (1996) dur. 9'
full ensemble

Barry Truax (b. 1947) ●

Wings of Fire (1997) dur. 14'
cello & tape

Keith Hamel (b. 1956) ●

Wings of Mercury (1997) dur. 12'
full ensemble

Intermission

Rudolf Komorous (b. 1931)

Slow Rant Boogie (1995) dur. 3'
ensemble

Michael Bushnell (b. 1950)

The Elusive Cabinet (1996) dur. 14'
solo flute, ensemble and tape

programme

Michael Longton (b. 1939)

Octet (1996) dur. 12'

full ensemble

Owen Underhill (b. 1954) ●

Hinge (1995/97) dur. 14'

full ensemble

● World Première

Vancouver New Music Ensemble:

Kathryn Cernauskas

Hamish Gordon

François Houle

Victor Costanzi

Susan Round

David Brown

Salvador Ferreras

Christopher Foley

Owen Underhill

flute

oboe

clarinet

violin

cello

bass

percussion

keyboard

conductor

Vancouver New Music is supported in part by
the City of Vancouver and the Province of BC
through the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism & Culture.
Their appearance is made possible with the assistance of the Touring
Office of the Canada Council and The SOCAN Foundation.



The Canada Council
Touring Office



Conseil des Arts du Canada
Office des tournées

The **Vancouver New Music Ensemble**, comprised of some of the finest of Vancouver's professional musicians, has been the core performance group of Vancouver New Music Society for over a decade. They have developed an extraordinary flexibility as an ensemble and an acute sensitivity to the special demands of contemporary music performance. The ensemble, under conductor Owen Underhill, has commissioned over 40 works by Canadian composers and premièred numerous other works by John Abram, Janet Danielson, Jose Evangelista, Peter Hannan, Peter Hatch, John Rea and Linda C. Smith.

The Vancouver New Music Society was founded in 1972 by a group of musicians, radio producers, and university teachers, including Ian Hampton, George Laverock, Phyllis Mailing and Simon Streatfield, to initiate performances of contemporary works. At first, attention was given to early 20th century works — Webern, Berg, and the young Stravinsky. In 1973 the emphasis shifted to newer music. Theatrical works have often been presented, including music dramas by Birtwistle, Stravinsky, Davies, Nyman, Komorous and Vivier. The society employs Vancouver musicians but prior to 1987, when Owen Underhill was appointed as its first artistic director, regularly imported guest conductors, including Lukas Foss (1974), Udo Kasemets, Serge Garant, and Peter Maxwell Davies (1976). Such foreign groups as Les Percussions de Strasbourg (1973), the Warsaw Music Workshop, the Kronos String Quartet, and Davies' Fires of London (all in 1976), Stuttgart's Trio Ex Voco (1977), and Tashi (1979) have been presented. Other composers and performers from abroad have included Louis Andriessen, John Cage, Philip Glass, Vinko Globokar, Heinz Holliger, Meredith Monk, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, Morton Subotnick, Frances Marie Uitti, Kevin Volans, the New Music Indonesia gamelan, the Schoenberg Ensemble, and Margaret Leng Tan.

An average of seven concerts have been presented annually and most of these have been recorded for nationwide broadcast on the CBC radio program Two New Hours. The Ensemble's first CD, *West Light*, was released in 1990 and included works by Rudolf Komorous, Rodney Sharman, and Owen Underhill. In 1995 they recorded repertoire by Michael Bushnell, Christopher Butterfield, Jo Kondo, Alexina Louie, Michael O'Neill, and Toru Takemitsu for a CBC disc to be released this spring.

NOTES

Rodney Sharman,
**Canon and Acrostic in celebration of
 Vancouver New Music Society's 25th anniversary**

Canon and Acrostic is dedicated to Owen Underhill and the Vancouver New Music Ensemble. Three versions of the canon follow one another in rapid succession. The last version makes explicit the first note of every bar, collectively (mis)spelling a famous, celebratory tune.

Janet Danielson
Igniting the Dawn

This piece probably sounds like some others you've heard. It basically goes up the G major scale but doesn't quite get to the top. If it isn't the harsh new music type thing you might have expected, it's because the numbers in it get divided instead of multiplied which gives you tunes in five-tone and three-tone scales instead of torquing up the overtone series into the critical band all the time. Too much critical band, it's like hey, hold the salad, I just want dressing today.

I call this clastic music. In case you were wondering, clastic isn't a cross between classic and plastic, it's a type of rock formed from ground-up older rocks. The older rock here is the Old 108th Psalm tune from Geneva, but don't go like, Old 108th meets world beat. Any resemblance to music of former colonial cultures is coincidental—what you hear is just what comes of applying a little simple arithmetic to an old tune. I used congas and string pizzicato because I like the sound of the hands hitting the gut, it balances out the Swiss thing.

The players are supposed to use a just scale. Why? Because your ordinary scale can't cut it when it comes to chaos. Its smallest steps are all exactly the same size. The just scale has different kinds of whole and half steps which correspond to the harmonic series where the proportions of the triad are reiterated at a smaller scale in the proportions between consecutive tones higher up in the series. It could almost pass for an iterated function

system where the fine details are tiny clones of larger patterns (picture a fern leaf)—a point not lost on Ramos, the Spanish theorist whose seminal work on musical relationships was cut short by a sexually transmitted disease five hundred years ago. He rejected equal half-step scales for their lack of diversity (his words) and worked out the just scale long before Mandelbrot and Co. started their fractals buzz.

Segueing back to my piece, you might notice some things happening when you didn't quite expect them. This is because I used the Fibonacci series now and again, sometimes to expand the tune, sometimes to contract it. At the microcellular level, your brain is made up of microtubules formed of spirals of Fibonacci numbers, so the use of that series should ring a bell somewhere. Rocket scientists in the audience, here is your opportunity: see if you can figure out where the rhythms are multiplied by 13 and 21. Your average listener will probably find those widespread rhythms a tad irritating—even multiplying the rhythm by 8 is pushing it in terms of what your consciousness wants to recognize. When it gets down to 5 your brain will start pulling the sounds together into coherent patterns, and you should start feeling you've got a grip on the rhythms again when they are played in multiples of three and two.

This piece isn't meant to be a brain experiment, however. *Igniting the Dawn* is more a short meditation on the ordinary everyday transition from sleep to wake, from dark to day, from focus to dispersion, and on how we expect dawn and rely on it because of the cyclic nature of its motion. On the other hand, that same circular motion means we can never quite pin daybreak down: the exact moment always slips right by.

Barry Truax
Wings of Fire

Wings of Fire incorporates a reading by Ellie Epp of the poem of that title by British Columbia poet Joy Kirstin. In the work, the lover addressed in the poem is personified by the instrument which is also the source of all the material used to create the tape part. This material consists only of short fragments of bowing on the bridge of the instrument, natural and artificial

harmonics, snap pizzicato, and col legno attacks (using the wooden part of the bow to hit the string). The sounds on tape that resemble bowed notes are in fact synthesized using digital resonators that model the behaviour of a string, each tuned to the pitch of one of the cello's open strings. These resonators are used to process both the cello sounds and the text such that at certain moments the voice and instrument merge as one. *Wings of Fire* was commissioned by Vancouver New Music for its 1997 Canadian tour.

Technical note: The work was realized using the composer's podx system which incorporates the dmx-1000 Digital Signal Processor controlled by a pdp Micro-11 computer with software for real-time granular synthesis and signal processing developed by the composer in the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University. The sounds were recorded on 8-track tape and mixed down in the Sonic Research Studio at SFU.

Wings of Fire

*This air that is my breath,
this circling of wings that rises in me.
All I know to be true, all that I am
awaits you.
Sapphire moon, blood of the angels,
on rivers of blue fire, bone and body
are beginnings. In the stillness,
we pause at the quiet wells,
the deepest waitings
where we quench our thirst.
There is fire in this union.
In this crucible, we forge each other,
molten chaos and sharp edges. Passion
slices open understandings.
That which cuts can cure.
Your tongue speaks truths
I've never known, tempers me
with words from languages I've never heard.
Venomous and blazing, your kiss
leaves me paralyzed. Pausing between sabotage
and treason, honey lingers on my lips
and I learn anew the wonder of desire.*

*We cross continents to weave our future,
stars and sand and soil
and feathered threads
that twirl and spin
beneath our touch.
With wings of fire, I shall embrace you.
You who are my nemesis
and my becoming,
the fertile ground below me
and the night sky
pierced with visions.*

Joy Kirstin © 1994

Keith Hamel
Wings of Mercury

Wings of Mercury is primarily concerned with the relation between the perceived motion of the surface material and that of the underlying harmonic layers. In each of the sections of the composition, a different relationship between these layers is explored.

The title refers to the Roman messenger god (who had wings on his heels). Much of the piece is mercurial; it has a rapid and active surface, and changes of texture are often abrupt and unpredictable. Also, the word "mercury" can be seen as making reference to metal, since metal percussion instruments are so prominently featured in the work. *Wings of Mercury* was commissioned by the Vancouver New Music Ensemble with the assistance of the Music Section of the Canada Council.

Rudolf Komorous
Slow Rant Boogie

Slow Rant Boogie was written for the concert celebrating the 35th anniversary of the Canadian Music Centre and is dedicated to Colin Miles, its British Columbia Regional Director, with gratitude for his exemplary service to Canadian music. The meticulously calculated form of the piece is rather intricate underneath its ostensible simplicity. All six players of the ensemble are featured as soloists.

Michael Bushnell
The Elusive Cabinet

Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary* offers the following definitions for the term "cabinet", as follows: 1. A case or cupboard usually having doors or shelves. 2. A collection of specimens, especially of mineralogical, biological or numismatic interest. 3. An upright case housing a radio or television receiver. 4. A chamber having temperature and humidity controls and used especially for incubating biological samples. 5. A small room providing seclusion. 6. A small exhibition room in a museum.

Michael Longton
Octet

Octet is radically different from the music I have been writing recently. While most of my recent works have been deliberately discontinuous, *Octet* takes an opposite approach, spinning out a single, gradually evolving line through the course of its single movement. It is obsessed with recapitulation but has a very short-term memory, so that while material is constantly repeated, it ends up in a state very different from its starting point.

Owen Underhill
Hinge

Hinge was composed at the request of pianist Douglas Finch for the Continuum Ensemble in London, England. In the piece, various instrumental groupings and musical materials are juxtaposed and alternated, flipping back and forth as if connected by a hinge. The piano part often takes on a solo role, frequently in the company of percussion. This version, which is being premiered on this tour, has been specially arranged for the Vancouver New Music Ensemble. *Hinge* was commissioned with the assistance of a grant from the Canada Council.

BIOGRAPHIES

Rodney Sharman (born 1958) lives in Vancouver and is the newly appointed Composer-in-Residence with the Vancouver Symphony. His music has been performed in more than 30 countries by many interpreters, including the Montreal Symphony and the Arditti String Quartet. He is currently writing a chamber opera with libretto by filmmaker Atom Egoyan for Vancouver New Music. Sharman has recently been appointed to the jury of the 1997 Gaudeamus Competition for Young Composers, Amsterdam.

Janet Danielson is a composer and music educator working in Vancouver, BC. Upon receiving a Bachelor of Music from the University of Victoria and winning the Canadian League of Composers National Award for Young Canadian Composers, she spent a year in England studying composition and Marxist-Leninist thought with Cornelius Cardew. She completed a Master of Fine Arts degree in Music Composition at the California Institute of the Arts, where she worked with Harold Budd, Earle Brown and Morton Subotnick. Since then she has been composing, arranging and teaching in a wide range of places and situations including Germany, where she attended the 1990 International Ferienkurs für Neue Musik in Darmstadt; New Zealand (1992), where she represented Canada at the Asia-Pacific Festival and Conference; and Amsterdam (1994), where she was invited to present her work at the Gaudeamus International Composers' Workshop.

Danielson's music has been performed and broadcast in Belgium, Great Britain, the USA and Canada. Her collaboration with British choreographer Janet Randall was screened over ITV-Midlands, and recently her work for chamber ensemble, *Still Waters*, was featured at the Around the Rim Festival in New York. She has taught at the University of British Columbia, was President of Vancouver New Music for four years, and currently teaches at Simon Fraser University in addition to serving as Associate Artistic Director of Vancouver New Music.

Barry Truax is a Professor in both the School of Communication and the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University where he teaches courses in acoustic communication

and electroacoustic music. He has worked with the World Soundscape Project, editing its Handbook for Acoustic Ecology, and has published a book, *Acoustic Communication*, dealing with all aspects of sound and technology. As a composer, Truax is best known for his work with the podx computer music system which he has used for tape solo works and those which combine tape with live performers or computer graphics. A selection of these pieces may be heard on the recording *Sequence of Earlier Heaven*, and the Compact Discs *Digital Soundscapes*, *Pacific Rim*, *Song of Songs* and *Inside*, all on the Cambridge Street Records label. In 1991 his work, *Riverrun*, was awarded the Magisterium at the International Competition of Electroacoustic Music in Bourges, France, a category open only to electroacoustic composers of 20 or more years experience.

Keith Hamel was born in 1956 in Morden, Manitoba. He is known both as a composer and a music software developer. He studied music at the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto and Queen's University in Canada, and pursued graduate studies at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the USA. He holds a Ph.D. in Music from Harvard University. Hamel has written both acoustic and electroacoustic music and has been awarded many prizes in both media. His works have been performed by many of the finest soloists and ensembles both in Canada and abroad. He has received commissions from the Ensemble InterContemporain (Paris), Vancouver New Music Ensemble, the Elektra Women's Choir, bassoonist Jesse Read, clarinetist Jean-Guy Boisvert, saxophonist Julia Nolan and pianist Douglas Finch. Many of his recent compositions focus on interaction between live performers and computer-controlled electronics. As a software developer, Hamel is recognized as one of the foremost authorities on music notation software. He is author of both the NoteWriter and NoteAbility software packages which are used around the world for professional music engraving and publishing. Keith Hamel is an associate of the Canadian Music Centre, and a member of the Canadian League of Composers and the Canadian Electroacoustic Community. He has been a professor of composition and Director of the Computer Music Studio at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver since 1987. His music is published by Editions Musicales Européennes of Paris.

Rudolf Komorous, born (1931) and educated in Prague, Czech Republic, emigrated to Canada in 1969. In 1971 he joined the faculty of the School of Music at the University of Victoria. From 1989 till 1994 he served as Director of the School for the Contemporary Arts, Simon Fraser University. He has an extensive catalogue of works for solo instruments, voice, chamber music ensembles, orchestra and opera. His compositions have been featured at contemporary festivals including the Venice Biennale, Warsaw Autumn, Donaueschingen and Prague Spring. At present Komorous is on administrative leave, working on several commissioned pieces.

Michael Bushnell was born in New York City in 1950. He completed his undergraduate studies at Bennington College, where he worked with Vivian Fine, Henry Brant and Lionel Nowak. He received his Ph.D. at the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1984, where his principal teacher was Bulent Arel. For many years he was the resident composer for the Mimi Garrard Dance Theatre in New York City. In 1989 he moved to Vancouver, where he has taught at both the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University, and worked with several Vancouver choreographers. In 1992 his orchestral piece, *East River Motions*, was premiered by the Windsor Symphony. A dance theatre work, *Last One Out*, composed in collaboration with Santa Aloi and Gina Stockdale, was premiered at the Women In View Festival in January 1992. Recently he has been working on a series of electroacoustic pieces, with the first three, *Sharp Lines—Soft Light*, *Berlin* and *Midnight* completed thus far.

Michael Longton attended the University of British Columbia, where he studied composition with Cortland Hultberg and piano with Boris Roubakine. He taught at the University of Western Ontario for several years before joining the University of Victoria's School of Music in 1975. Longton has been the Director of the University of Victoria School of Music since 1991. During the 1970s and early '80s, after studying computer-generated music at Stanford (ccrma), Longton made mainly electroacoustic music, some of it on tape, some of it interactive. In recent years he has returned to writing instrumental music, and has written specifically for the ensembles Arraymusic, Les Coucous Bénévoles, Arcana, and for pianists Eve Egoyan and Stephanie Chow. His work has been heard often on CBC's Two New Hours.

Owen Underhill, composer and conductor, lives in Vancouver where he is the Artistic Director of Vancouver New Music and the Director of the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University. Underhill is an active interpreter of contemporary music, having conducted the premieres of compositions by such composers as John Abram, Serge Arcuri, Michael Bushnell, Christopher Butterfield, Brian Cherney, Jose Evangelista, Anthony Genge, Denis Gougeon, Peter Hannan, Melissa Hui, Rudolf Komorous, Alexina Louie, David MacIntyre, and Marjan Mozetich. He has worked successfully with several visiting composers including Louis Andriessen, Ge Gan-Ru, Sofia Gubaidulina, Steve Reich and Kevin Volans as well as with soloists including violist Steven Dann, cellist Vladimir Tonkha, accordion virtuoso Friedrich Lipps, pianist Margaret Leng Tan, and bass clarinetist Lori Freedman. Underhill participates regularly in concert and on radio with the Vancouver New Music Ensemble, and has conducted the CBC Vancouver Orchestra, the Manitoba Chamber Choir, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, and Winnipeg's contemporary music group Groundswell. His performances are often broadcast on the CBC, particularly on the national program *Two New Hours*. His first compact disc as a conductor, *West Light*, featuring the Vancouver New Music Ensemble, was released on the Centrediscs label in 1990.

Underhill is also a busy composer; among his most recent compositions are an orchestral piece *Labyrinth of Ears* commissioned by the Esprit Orchestra and an accordion solo, *Tenebroso* which has recently been premiered at the Big Squeeze Accordion Festival in Toronto. He has also had works performed by such groups as the Iseler Singers, the Victoria Symphony, the Austrian Ensemble for New Music, Arraymusic, the early music group Les Coucous Bénévoles, the Arcadian Winds from Boston, and the Vancouver Chamber Choir. His solo marimba work *Partita* performed by Rick Sacks has been newly released on the compact disc *Strange Companions* on the Artifact label. His work *Lines of Memory* won the 1994 DuMaurier Composers' Competition, and his opera *The Star Catalogues*, written with librettist Marc Diamond, premiered in the fall of 1994.



SOCAN FOUNDATION COMPETITIONS

April 1, 1997 is the deadline for two national competitions sponsored by The SOCAN Foundation.

SOCAN Awards for Young Composers

Prizes totalling \$17,500 are available to composers under 30 for works for full symphony orchestras, chamber ensembles, electroacoustic music, solo or duet compositions and choral works.

Gordon F. Henderson/SOCAN Copyright Competition

A \$2,000 prize is available for an essay dealing with copyright law as it relates to music. The competition is open to law students who are Canadian citizens or landed immigrants.

Brochures containing competition rules and application forms are available from the Foundation or any SOCAN office.

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New Music Concerts gratefully acknowledges the financial support of: The Canada Council, The Province of Ontario through the Ontario Arts Council, The Toronto Arts Council, The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto Cultural Affairs Division, The Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, Mrs H.S. Aitken, Amphion Foundation, Banca Commerciale Italiano of Canada, Barclays Bank of Canada, Thomas G. Bata, John Beckwith, Norma Beecroft, Jessie W. Bird, Alison Brigden, Cornelius W. Brink, The British Council, CAE Industries Ltd., Canada Trust, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Canadian Tire Corporation, Austin Clarkson, Beverly Clarkson, The Max Clarkson Foundation, Mr. & Mrs. Max B.E. Clarkson, CN Rail, Co-Steel Inc., Tom Currie, Sibylle Dickstein, Michael Doleschell, First Marathon Securities Ltd., James D. Fleck, R.P. Fournier, Harry Freedman, Vera Frenkel Productions, Arthur Gelber, Goethe-Institut (Toronto), Grand and Toy Ltd., Morgan Harris, Sam Harrison, H.J. Heinz Company of Canada, Helix Investments Ltd., Barbara Ivey, Istituto Italiano di Cultura, The Jackman Foundation, The Japan Foundation, George B. Kiddell, The Henry White Kinnear Foundation, Michael Koerner, John Labatt Ltd., The Laidlaw Foundation, John Lawson, Livingston International Inc., Long and McQuade Ltd., D. Bain MacCaskill, Magna International Canada Ltd., Jan Matejcek, Matsushita Electric of Canada Ltd., Joanne Mazzoleni, Kathleen McMorro, David Mirvish, The Mitsui Foundation, George Montague, Mary Morrison, Nabisco Brands Ltd., Noma Industries Ltd., David Olds, Peter Oliphant, M.G. Oliver, Harvey Olnick, Mary Ellen Perkins, Petro-Canada Products Inc., Pioneer Electronics Inc., Sue Polanyi, Pratt and Whitney Canada Inc., Lisa Rapoport, Dr. P. Rapoport, Redpath Industries Ltd., River Oaks Homes and Merrick Homes, Patricia Rideout, Royal Bank of Canada,

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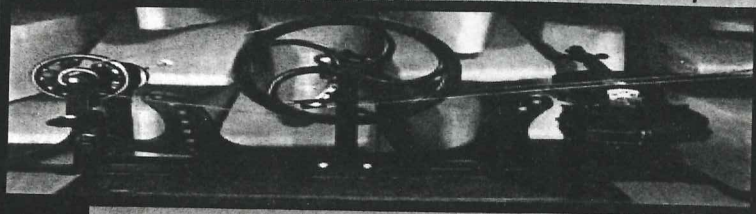
Our next concert: a memorial tribute to the acclaimed Japanese composer **Toru Takemitsu** featuring Robert Aitken, flute, Erica Goodman, harp, and percussionists Bob Becker, Robin Engelman and John Wyre performing a major retrospective of his chamber works. The concert takes place at the Glenn Gould Studio on **Thursday February 20, 1997 at 8:00 pm**; it will be preceded with introductory remarks by NMC artistic director Robert Aitken and a video portrait of the composer at 7:00 pm.

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